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stream

1. <communications> An abstraction referring to any flow of data from a source (or sender, producer) to a single sink (or receiver, consumer). A stream usually flows through a channel of some kind, as opposed to packets which may be addressed and routed independently, possibly to multiple recipients. Streams usually require some mechanism for establishing a channel or a "connection" between the sender and receiver.

2. <programming> In the C language's buffered input/output library functions, a stream is associated with a file or device which has been opened using fopen. Characters may be read from (written to) a stream without knowing their actual source (destination) and buffering is provided transparently by the library routines.

3. <operating system> Confusingly, Sun have called their modular device driver mechanism "STREAMS".

4. <operating system> In IBM's AIX operating system, a stream is a full-duplex processing and data transfer path between a driver in kernel space and a process in user space.

[IBM AIX 3.2 Communication Programming Concepts, SC23-2206-03].

5. <communications> streaming.

6. <programming> lazy list.

(1996-11-06)

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